REMARKS

The abstract has been objected to in the office action. A new abstract is hereby provided. No new matter has been added.

Claim 1 (presumably claim 8) has been rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, for the term "network element" being used interchangeably. Applicants respectfully disagree. There are two terms that are recited in this claim, "network element" to be exchanged (old network element, 7) and the "exchange network element" (new network element, 4) (see, for example, Figure 1 and the corresponding description). These terms are clearly recited. The Examiner is kindly requested to withdraw the rejection.

Claims 8-17 have been rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as anticipated by Leung. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

In the present invention, transaction reports are routed between the network element to be exchanged and the signaling network via the exchange element. In this way, the exchange network element operates as a forwarding station for the transaction reports. If a transaction report enters an exchange network element from the signaling network, an initial check (determination) is made by the exchange network element as to whether the report is intended for the exchange network element itself or for the network element to be exchanged. If the transaction report is intended for the network element to be exchanged, it is labeled by the exchange network element with the network element to be exchanged as its intended destination and returned to the MTP of the signaling network. The SCCP of SS#7 is used for this, and the report is processed in the network element to be exchanged. In the exchange network element, after arrival of a transaction report transferred by the network element to be exchanged or intended for the latter, the TID of the transaction report is registered. With the information obtained from the TID, it is possible to exclude ambiguities when generating further TIDs.

Leung discloses Transaction Capabilities (TCs) to preserve end-to-end TCAP connectivity between SP A and SP C, while allowing SP B to end its TC dialogues after it is no longer needed, as illustrated in Figs. 2 and 3 and paragraph [0033]. Specifically, the Examiner cites paragraph [0026], lines 35-38 as disclosing the determination of whether a transaction report arriving from the signaling network is intended for the network element to be exchanged or the exchange network element itself (page 4 of the Office Action). However, the

determination that "upon the second SP determining that the query received from the first SP should be handled by the third SP" is determined by the second SP, not the exchange SP (SP C). In the claimed invention, as amended, the <u>exchange network element,</u> which originally receives the transaction report from the signaling network ("all transaction reports between the network element to be exchanged and the signaling network via the exchange network element"), determines whether a transaction report arriving from the signaling network is intended for the network element to be exchanged or the exchange network element itself, as required by claim 8. As the Examiner notes, in Leung, the <u>second SP</u> makes the determination as to whether the transaction was intended for another, third SP. However, the first SP, not the second SP, receives the original transaction. Hence, Leung fails to disclose an exchange network element that receives the transaction report <u>and</u> determines whether the transaction report was intended for it or another network element.
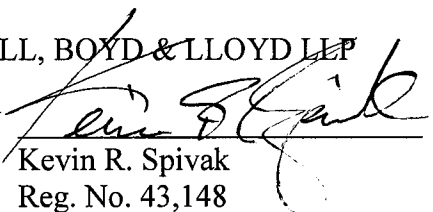
Since the recited method is not disclosed by the applied prior art, claims 8-17 are patentable.

In view of the above, Applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance. An indication of the same is solicited. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge deposit account 02-1818 for any fees which are due and owing, referencing Attorney Docket No. 119010-013.

Respectfully submitted,

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